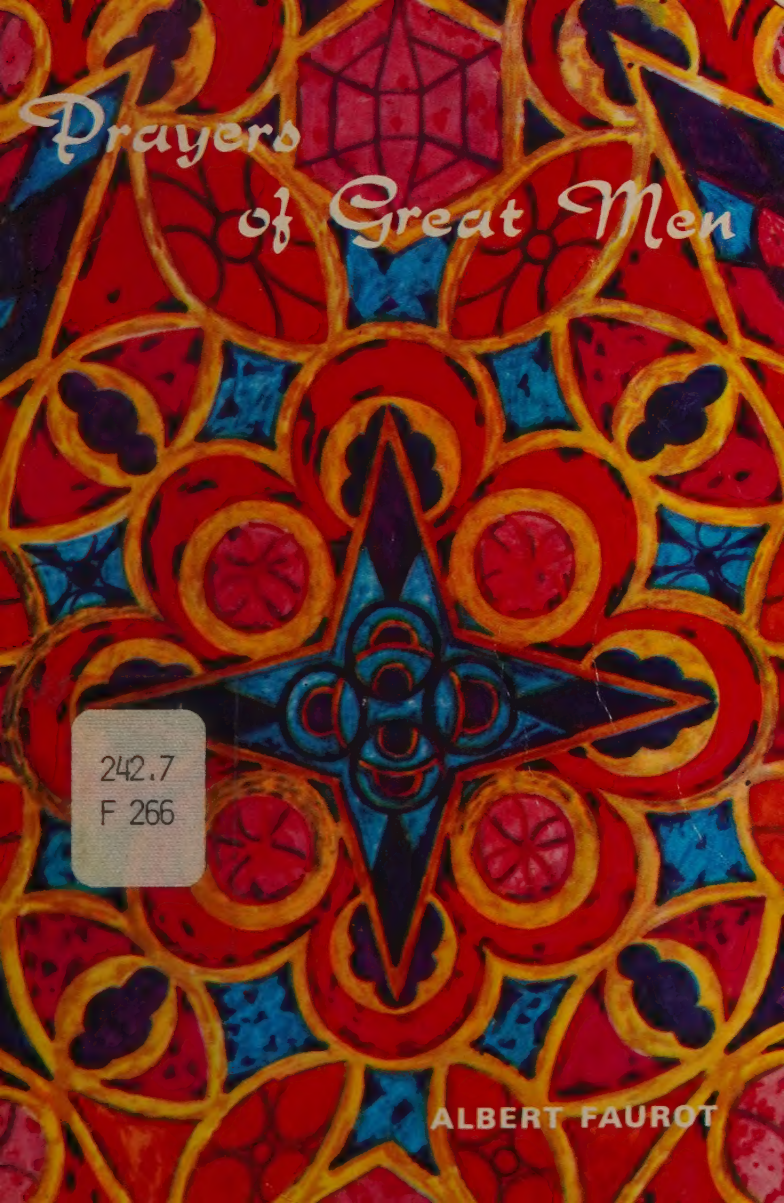
Prayers of Great Men



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Prayers of Great Men

Selected and Interpreted by

ALBERT FAUROT

NEW DAY PUBLISHERS

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by MAX ABELLANEDA

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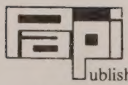

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To the memory of my Father,
who taught me how to pray.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Culture Currents of the World (out of print)

Culture Currents of World Art

Culture Currents of World Music (in preparation)

Concert Piano Repertoire

Team Piano Repertoire (with Frederic Ming Chang)

PREFACE

This collection grew out of my discovery of St. Augustine. Reading the *Confessions,* I was struck with how often the man burst into prayer, and found that the entire book was in the vocative case, addressed to God. Even more striking was the spontaneous freshness and simplicity of the prayers and their aptness to our own day. This very human saint made the slow deliberate transition from a life of debauchery to one of godliness; he lived in a decadent age and watched the decline and fall of a great empire, experiences which find parallels in our own lives and times.

Copying the prayers out for my own use, and looking up others, I came across those of Augustine's contemporaries. What an age it was, the Fourth Century! Hilary of Poitiers in France, Patrick in Ireland, John Chrysostum in Antioch, Basil in Cesarea, Cyril in Jerusalem, Ambrose in Milan, and Augustine in Africa and Italy. I found other stirring prayers not only by churchmen, but also from kings and statesmen and scholars. Some of the early kings, like Charlemagne who could neither read nor write, had helpful ghost writers in their devout and learned ministers. In the formal liturgies and service and hymns of various churches too I found inspiring prayers to add to the collection.

Feeling that others might also find the prayers helpful I have collected and arranged them. When they reflect an age or a personality, I have added a brief historical or biographical note. Several are from the Church of England and its saints and statesmen; in these I have retained the quaint archaic *thee* and *thou,* familiar to all through the King James version of the Bible, that they may speak to us in their own voices. To make some of the prayers more contemporary I have added a prayer of my own in modern terms.

The commendable practice of reading a prayer for a daily devotion came late to me, enriching a lifetime habit of Bible reading. Prayer, too, was a part of daily life from childhood, but was something made up or improvised for each occasion, as was the order of worship in my father's church. Every day of my life for eighteen years I heard my father lead the family prayers, and his public prayers on Sundays were long and eloquent. I too learned to "lead in prayer." As a child it was a game, stringing together the right cliches and making it to the end to impress my young friends. In my teens I read the biography of Hudson Taylor, and private prayer suddenly took on the dynamics of a veritable encounter with the Divine. In long nightly prayers, kneeling by the window looking into the sky above a prairie town, I improvised my own Confessions, not for human ears, but for a God whose existence and love I have never doubted. I carried the custom into public when I began teaching, opening my classes and lectures with a "sentence prayer," both to quiet the students and to bolster my courage, for

talking to God was natural, while addressing a class was still strange.

Formal prayers read out in public at first repelled me, when heard in the high church service of our college chapel. I was not attracted to them till I learned to sing them in the Anglican liturgy, worshiping with the small English-speaking congregation in Foochow, China, during the war. The minister often walked to the back of the nave to lead in the collects and prayers, that his voice might blend with that of those who knelt. During the refugee years these memorized prayers often sprang to mind in time of need.

A selected prayer, poem or hymn is now part of my daily devotions in the early morning, in the shade of an acacia tree. This collection is made up of my favorites. If some of them can help someone else to face or finish, with calm faith, another day of life, I shall be rewarded.

I wish to thank the Rev. Elias Ellar who patiently copied out these and many other prayers, and traced down names, dates, sources. My gratitude also goes to Fern Babcock Grant to whose encouragement and help the completion of the book is due.

Albert Faurot

Silliman University
Dumaguete City
January, 1976

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Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that
I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
Not so much to be understood as
To understand; not so much to be
Loved as to love:
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned;
It is in dying, that we awaken to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assist, 1182-1226

Few of the saints have also been poets, able to put into words that haunt our memory, prayers that probe our psyche, and prescribe our cure. Send us forth, O God, this day, remembering that we are your tools, your voice and hands, for the needs of the world. In his name, Amen.

Shepherd of tender youth, Guiding in love and truth,
Through devious ways;
Christ our triumphant King, we come Thy name to sing,
Hither our children bring, to sound Thy praise.
Thou didst Thyself abase, that from sin's deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race, and give us life.
Ever be Thou our Guide, Our Shepherd and our Pride, our staff and song,
Jesus, Thou Christ of God, by Thy perennial word,
Lead us where Thou hast trod, make our faith strong.

Clement of Alexandria, 170-220

This first headmaster of one of the first private Christian schools was also the first hymn-writer to add to the Psalms and ancient chants new verses of his own. We can imagine this was written for Founder's Day, or Commencement, or opening Convocation, with the proud parents present. Later, after a particularly bad day with the boys, he added a verse beginning, "Bridle of Untamed Colts."

We are both, O God: sometimes meek as lambs needing a leader, sometimes unwilling to be fenced in and harnessed like wild horses. Comfort and lead us

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

James Montgomery, 1771-1854

Nowadays this author, who spent his life as editor of a newspaper, would doubtless be called an activist. He was twice imprisoned for championing unpopular causes. Of his more than 400 hymns, at least a hundred still appear in hymnals and stir us with their message.

---

with Your rod and staff; and also curb us with bit and bridle that we may be harnessed to pull our load on the Way of Life. Amen.

Guilt, inadequacy and insecurity are three of our heaviest burdens. The saints bore them, too, but they also had a vision of a transcending, transforming power, offered freely to everyone. And, seizing it, they grew from sinners to saints. It was seldom a quick-change act, an instant cure; and out of the slow agonizing change, came these great cries of prayer, that still express our needs, as unchanged men in a changeless world.

I know, O Lord, and do with all humility acknowledge myself an object altogether unworthy of your love; but I am sure you are an object altogether worthy of mine. I am not good enough to serve you, but you have a right to the best service I can pay. Do then impart to me some of that excellence, and that shall supply my own want of worth. Help me to cease from sin according to my duty. Enable me so to guard and govern myself, so to begin and finish my course, that, when the race of life is run, I may sleep in peace, and rest in you. Be with me unto the end, that my sleep may be rest indeed, my rest perfect security, and that security a blessed eternity. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Who can tell what a day may bring forth? Cause us, therefore, gracious God, to live every day as if it were to be our last for we know not but it may be such. Cause us to live so at present as we shall wish we had may not die with any guilt upon our consciences, or may know sin unrepented of, but that we may be found in Christ, who is our only Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

Thomas a' Kempis, 1379-1471

"What a difference a day makes!" one of our Pop songs exclaims. And another: "Today is the first day of the rest of my life!" It might also be the last, as Thomas reminds us. Only you, dear God, can help us to attain the serenity that is willing to face the possibility of everything ending at 2:00 p.m. today. We've lost that saintly yearning for Heaven; restore to us the faith that the future life is good. And give us joyous zest for living to the full this day, and the time that is left to us, whether it be twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, and living it unashamedly to your glory. Amen.

O God, who bestowest Thy mercy at all times on them that love Thee, and in no place art distant from those that serve Thee; direct the way of Thy servant in Thy will, that having Thee for his Protector and Guide, he may walk without stumbling in the paths of righteousness, with Jesus Christ our Lord. Give protection to beginners, O God; give intelligence to the little ones, give aid to those who are running their course. Give compunction to the negligent, give fervor of spirit to the lukewarm, give to the perfect a good consummation. Amen.

A Gallican Sacramentary, 6th Century

Help us, O God, not only to pray for those who are learning, and in need of guidance, but, with your help, to teach and guide them. And, in order that we may not appear as hypocrites to those trusting and searching young eyes, keep us from indolence and negligence, and show us how to use the intelligence you have given us to the full. May we lead and direct those under us to the best of our skill, with you as our Model, Protector, Guide and Master. In your name, Amen.

One of the first Northern lands to accept Christianity, Ireland developed such a strong church in the early centuries, that missionaries went from there to convert the pagans on the continent.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me save that thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Ancient Irish

Dear God, we pray for the people of this land where you have been worshipped for so long, and who now are torn by bitter and violent religious strife. You only can open a way for them to find peace and unity, concord and fraternity, "that they may be one in Thee." In His Name, Amen.

Philipp Melanchthon, 1526

This close friend of Martin Luther, whose cheerful countenance is preserved for us in a Dürer etching (see p. 8), was the peace-maker and go-between in the disputes between Catholics and Protestants, and within the Protestant movement. Such men were called Blessed by our Lord, and we need them today, as never before.

O Thou, Who art the author of all good things in Thy holy Church, work mightily in all Thy servants, that they may be profitable to all, and vessels of Thy mercy and grace. Control us all, and so govern our thoughts and deeds, that we may serve Thee in righteousness and true holiness; and sanctify us all unto that eternal life, which we, with all Thy creatures, groaning and travailing together, wait for and expect; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Comfort, O merciful Father, by Thy Word, and Holy Spirit, all who are afflicted or distressed, and so turn their hearts unto Thee, that they may serve Thee in Truth, and bring forth fruit to Thy glory. Be Thou, O Lord, their succour and defence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Philipp Melanchthon, 1497-1560

The appellation "The Great" seems to be an accurate term for this able administrator, humanitarian, writer, reformer. For a thousand years the music of the litany which he caused to be edited and revised was called Gregorian chant. The English church proudly honors the missionary, Augustine of Canterbury, whom Pope Gregory was inspired to send to Britain when he saw blonde slaves for sale in Rome, who he said should be called angels, not Angles. He drew his power from the daily death and resurrection of the Spirit, for which he prayed.

O God, Whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us; for the honor of Jesus Christ, our Mediator, and Advocate.

O God, who for our redemption didst give Thine only begotten Son to death on the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of the enemy, grant us to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him, in the joy of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gregory the Great, 540-604

Look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of your brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of your Wisdom. All our desire is known unto you, therefore perfect what you have begun, and what your spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer. We seek your face; turn your face unto us and show us your glory. Then shall our longing be satisfied, and our peace shall be perfect. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Nowadays, O God, even the longing for you seems to be gone, and we don't even know that we are groping about in the dark, zombies going automatically about our business, or sound asleep. Stir us anew, Divine One, with Augustine's vision of your glory for our fullness, your wisdom for our folly, your peace for our restlessness. In your name, Amen.

The Frenchman, John Calvin, was, after the German Luther, twenty-five years his senior, the most influential leader in the Reform movement of the 16th century. He was a fellow student of Loyola and Francis Xavier at the University of Paris, and like them, of a highly moral, pious and austere nature. After the success of his *Institutes,* written while he was still in his twenties and eventually to become the basis of most reformed creeds, he was banished to Geneva, which he sought to make a model Christian city. His prayers show his longing for a unity of believers.

Grant, Almighty God, that since, at the coming of Christ thy Son thou didst really perform that thy servants the prophets had foretold so long before, and since thou daily invitest us until now to the unity of faith, that with united efforts we may truly serve thee,–O grant, that we may not continue torn asunder, every one pursuing his own perverse inclinations, at a time when Christ is thus gathering us unto thee. May we then add to the true and lawful worship of thy name brotherly love toward one another, that with united efforts we may promote each other's good . . . that we may ever be able with full confidence to call on thee as our Father, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Calvin, 1509-64

Prayer should begin by calling on God for our most immediate and intimate needs, by recognizing our inadequacy to meet them and His all-encompassing concern and power. It can then expand to a concern for those for whom we care and are responsible. We in turn, though we have none of the enormous responsibilities of this Prime Minister to Good Queen Bess, may draw God's power to help our neighbors.

O heavenly Father, Who watchest always over Thy faithful people, and mightily defendest them, so that they be harmlessly preserved, I most heartily thank Thee, that it hath pleased Thy fatherly goodness to take care of me this night past. I most entirely beseech Thee, O most merciful Father, that I may neither think, breathe, speak, nor do anything that may be displeasing to Thy fatherly goodness, dangerous to myself, or hurtful to my neighbour; but that all my doings may be agreeable to Thy most blessed will, which is always good; that they may advance Thy glory, answer to my vocation, and profit my neighbour, whom I ought to love as myself. Amen.

Thomas Bacon, 1511-1570

One of the oldest branches of the church, the Coptic, still flourishing in Egypt today, incorporated into its liturgy the prayers of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem. A learned scholar, honored by the Roman Catholic church as one of the few doctors in its long history, Cyril was also, as his writings show, both a mystic, concerned with an intimate communion with his Lord, and an active social worker, vigorously working to reclaim the church from the corruption and disorder of his day. We need both virtues in our own times and lives.

God of love, Who hast given a new commandment, through Thine Only begotten Son, that we should love one another, even as Thou didst love us, the unworthy and the wandering, and gavest Thy beloved Son for our life and salvation; we pray Thee, Lord, give to us Thy servants during all the time of our life on the earth, a mind forgetful of past ill-will, a pure conscience and sincere thoughts, and a heart to love our brethren. Amen.

Coptic Liturgy of St. Cyril, 315-389

This cultured Renaissance woman, of an ancient Roman family, was the moving spirit of a devout group who sought to learn the truth in the Northern Reformation, and bring about a Counter-Reformation within the Roman church. Among those who gathered at her home was Michelangelo. Between visits they exchanged letters, spiritual poems and prayers, and her influence on the sculptor's last years was profound. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith which came, in turn, from St. Augustine and St. Paul, was accepted by the Marchessa and her group, though they also sought to match their faith with works of piety.

We beseech Thee, most tender Father, that Thy most living fire may purify us, that Thy most clear light may illumine us, and that Thy most pure love may so avail us, that without let or hindrance of mortal things, we may return to Thee in happiness and security; through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Saviour. Amen.

Vittoria Colonna, 1490

Lord Jesus, in the days of old,
Two walked with thee in waning light;
And love's blind instinct made them bold
To crave thy presence through the night.
As night descends, we too would pray,
O leave us not at close of day.

Did not their hearts within them burn?
And though their Lord they failed to know,
Did not their spirits also yearn?
They could not let the stranger go.
Much more must we who know thee pray,
O leave us not at close of day.

James A. Noble, 1844-1896

Dear Son of God, we envy those who met you, risen and walking on the road to Emmaus, and feel sure that we would know you. Yet how often we must pass you on the streets and walks. Give us that heartburn that comes, not from worry and anxiety, but from a deep yearning to meet you and recognize you with glad surprise. Amen.

This great scholar and teacher of scholars held that to hand on to others the fruit of contemplation was a far greater thing than merely meditating. He believed profoundly in the power of prayer. He left unfinished his greatest work, the *Summa Theologia,* because he felt that what he had seen in divine revelation and in the suffering of the world around him was too great to express.

Grant me, I beseech Thee, Almighty and most Merciful God, fervently to desire, widely to search out, and perfectly to fulfill, all that is well-pleasing unto Thee.

Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downward; give me an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give me an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside.

Bestow upon me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, wisdom to find Thee, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace Thee. Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274

This devout Dutch scholar urged sobriety and avoidance of excess in Christian living, unlike the Spanish saints who rose to ecstatic heights, or indulged in severe penance, or the violent and destructive Protestant reformers. He taught that neither ritual, theology, nor superstitious relic-worship held the answers, but a godly, kindly life, made glad by a clean conscience and inward goodness.

O you, who are the true Sun of the world, evermore rising, and never going down, who, by your most wholesome appearance nourishes and makes joyful all things in heaven and on earth, we beseech you mercifully and favourably to shine into our hearts, that the night and darkness of sin and the mists of error may be driven away. With you brightly shining within our hearts, may we go all our life long without any stumbling or offence, and may we walk as in the daytime, being pure and clean from the works of darkness, and abounding in all good works which you have prepared for us. Amen.

Desiderius Erasmus, 1466-1536

In our "Imitation of Christ," we must learn that most difficult of all lessons–to "forgive those who sin against us." St. Thomas urges us to seek God's grace in the equally hard tasks of forgiving, and of winning forgiveness from those who have hardened their hearts against us.

I offer up unto Thee my prayers and intercessions for those especially who have in any matter hurt, grieved, or found fault with me, or who have done any damage or displeasure.

For all those also whom, at any time, I may have vexed, troubled, burdened, and scandalized, by words or deeds, knowingly or in ignorance; that Thou wouldst grant us all equally pardon for our sins, and for our offenses against each other.

Take away from our hearts, O Lord, all suspiciousness, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt charity and lessen brotherly love.

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave Thy mercy, give grace unto them that stand in need thereof, and make us such as that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy grace, and go forward to life eternal. Amen.

Thomas a' Kempis, 1379-1471

Thomas More was indeed a "Man for All Seasons," cultured, witty, profound. His *Utopia* is still read, but he is now remembered for his gentle but firm opposition to Henry VIII, which eventually led to his execution, and canonization. Catholic youth around the world honor his memory in "St. Thomas More Guilds." His noble spirit shines forth in his prayers.

Give us, O Lord, an humble, quiet, peaceable, patient, tender and charitable mind, and in all our thoughts, words, and deeds let us have a taste of Thy Holy Spirit. Give us, O Lord, a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity, a love of Thee. Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation and dullness in prayer. Give us fervour and delight in thinking of Thee and Thy grace, Thy tender compassion towards us. The things, good Lord, that we pray for, give us grace to labour for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Thomas More, 1478-1535

Eloquent and ardent scholars of the classics, Loyola's order, the Jesuits, stressed education. They founded, wherever they went in their worldwide missions, schools that stressed logical thought, speech and communication. A thought is not a thought unless it can be communicated. In this prayer, recited by countless youths the world over, he has expressed man's deepest needs and highest yearnings.

Fill us, we pray Thee, with Thy light and life, that we may show forth Thy wondrous glory. Grant that Thy love may so fill our lives that we may count nothing too small to do for Thee, nothing too much to give, and nothing too hard to bear. So teach us, Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will. Amen.

St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556

No "generation gap" separated Augustine from his only son, though in our day the boy would no doubt be a psychotic. Born a bastard, Adeodatus saw his mother sent away when his father took a Christian wife. Unlike Ishmael, who followed his mother into the desert, Adeodatus clung to his "father Abraham," and was baptized at the same time, returning with him to Africa. During the short years of his life, they shared their faith and engaged in countless fruitful conversations. May parents today learn how to engage their children, and share their highest moments.

There is a book of mine called De Magistro, which consists of a dialogue between Adeodatus and myself. You know that all the ideas expressed by the second speaker in the discussion are his, although he was only sixteen when it took place, and I learned for myself that he had many other talents even more remarkable than this. His intelligence left me spell-bound. And who but you could work such wonders? But you took him from this world early in life, and now I remember him without apprehension, for there was nothing in his childhood or his youth or in any part of his life which need make me fear for him.

We made him our companion, in your grace no younger than ourselves. Together

we were ready to begin our schooling in your ways. We were baptized, and all anxiety over the past melted away from us. The days were all too short, for I was lost in wonder and joy, meditating upon your far-reaching providence for the salvation of the human race. Thanks be to you, my God. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

This eloquent poet and preacher spent the first third of his life vainly trying to win favor at Queen Elizabeth's court. When James I came to the throne, he at first invited, then commanded, the reluctant Donne to become a minister, putting him through a crash course in theology and appointing him to London's greatest church, St. Paul's Cathedral. There he preached sermons full of memorable phrases: "Ask not for whom the bell tolls;" "No man is an island;" and wrote great hymns like this one.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin, through which I run
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done, for I have more.
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.
But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy son
Shall shine as He shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done. I fear no more.

John Donne, 1573-1631

While still an unbaptized catechist, this son of a Praetorian guard was acclaimed Bishop of the provincial capital of Milan. He became such an eloquent theologian that he ranks with Gregory, Augustine, and Jerome as one of the four Latin doctors of the church. He was devoted to his congregation to whom he preached simple homilies, and for whom he wrote hymns. But he was fearless in denouncing folly in high places, and once locked the church against besiegers, while he led the congregation in singing. Monica was one of his congregation and her son Augustine was his convert.

To show us how he humbled himself, to let us see the mystery of it, he sat down, wearied, by a well. Of the Samaritan woman, whom he had prepared for the gift of faith, he asked for water to drink. What in his love he was thirsting for was that she should believe in him; and while he asked her for water, he was kindling fire in her heart, a fire of love for God.

Therefore we implore your boundless mercy that, turning from the dark depths of vice and shunning the flow of injurious passion, we may always thirst for you, the Fountain of life and Source of goodness. Amen.

St. Ambrose, 334-397

Give us grace and strength to persevere. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends and soften to us our enemies. Give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we may be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving to one another.

R. L. Stevenson, 1850-1894

–and loyal to you, God, for we could not ask these daring things and hope to receive them without you. We all need courage and constancy in this shifty, scary world. Even more we need to learn temperance and moderation, with so much at our finger-tips for the taking.

Quiet our minds; it helps us gather force for these more active virtues. And, give us those hardest and rarest virtues of all–gaiety and humor to meet everyone and everything with a smile, knowing that only you who are always with us can bring that. Thank you. Amen.

O Holy Spirit, Love of God, infuse thy grace, and descend plentifully into my heart; enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling, and scatter there thy cheerful beams; dwell in that soul that longs to be thy temple; water that barren soil, overrun with weeds and briars for want of cultivating, and make it fruitful with dew from heaven. Oh come, thou refreshment of them that languish and faint. Come, thou star and guide of them that sail in the tempestuous sea of the world; thou only Haven of the tossed and shipwrecked. Come, thou glory and crown of the living, and only safeguard of the dying. Come, Holy Spirit, in much mercy, and make me fit to receive Thee. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

After a youth of carelessness and wickedness, and many years of futile seeking, St. Augustine found you, O God, to be all that you had promised; a light in dark places, an indwelling Presence, the water of life, a rest for the weary. Restless, he said we are, until we find our rest in You, because you have made us for yourself. Grant, O God, that we, too, may find you a cooling, refreshing drink, a place of repose and calm. In His Name, Amen.

This blond Teuton giant who earned the title of "The Great" by uniting all Europe in his empire, could neither read nor write. He was a devout Christian, though his methods of converting the pagan tribes of Europe were often ruthless. After the ceremony on Christmas day, 800 A.D., when he was crowned Emperor of Rome, he returned to the North with teachers, musicians, artists and artisans, to make his chapel and capital at Aix-le Chapelle a model of learning and devotion.

Almighty and merciful God, the Fountain of all goodness, who knowest the thoughts of our hearts, we confess unto Thee that we have sinned against Thee, and done evil in Thy sight. Wash us, we beseech Thee, from the stains of our past sins, and give us grace and power to put away all hurtful things; so that, being delivered from the bondage of sin, we may bring forth worthy fruits of repentance.

O eternal Light, shine into our hearts. O eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil. O eternal Power, be Thou our support. Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance. Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us. Grant unto us that with all our hearts, and minds, and strength, we may evermore seek Thy face; and finally bring us, in Thine infinite mercy, to Thy holy Presence. So

strengthen our weakness that, following in the footsteps of Thy blessed Son, we may obtain Thy mercy, and enter into Thy promised joy. Amen.

Charlemagne, 742-818

The Moorish occupation of Spain produced not only that splendid architecture blending East and West known as Mozarabic but also a liturgy of intense and eloquent prayer. This was superseded by pomposity, after Spain, having driven out Islam, became the powerful capital of that shameful tool of the church, the Inquisition. Christians, in countries where they are still only tolerated as minority groups, might well turn to these prayers to voice their yearnings.

May no perplexity create in us an impatient spirit, no temptation lead us into sin, no sorrow hide Thy loving will from us.

Teach us all to feel the need of Thy grace and to seek it, to know Thy will and to do it; and to abide in peace in our appointed lot.

Calm our passions,
Repress the waywardness of our wills, and
Direct the motions of our affections.

Help us to forgive as we would be forgiven, dwelling neither in speech nor thought upon offences committed against us, but loving one another as Thou lovest us.

Help us with all diligence to keep our hearts, and to conform ourselves to Thy will in things both small and great.

Mozarabic Psalter, 700

This professor of theology at the newly opened University of Paris packed the lecture-room, then wrote love serenades for his students after hours. His own love for the Dean's daughter, Eloise, has provided poets, novelists and dramatists with one of the most beautiful love stories of all time. Though it cost him his job, he went on to become a distinguished theologian, while Eloise languished as a reluctant Abbess, continuing to write love letters to her "Lord and Master."

Alone thou goest forth, O Lord,
In sacrifice to die;
Is this thy sorrow naught to us
Who pass unheeding by?

Our sins, not thine, thou bearest, Lord,
Make us thy sorrow feel,
Till through our pity and our shame
Love answers love's appeal.

This is earth's darkest hour,
But Thou dost light and life restore;
Then let all praise be given thee
Who livest ever more.

Give us compassion for thee, Lord,
That, as we share this hour,
Thy cross may bring us to thy joy
And resurrection power. Amen.

Peter Abelard, 1079 1142

When we turn from the life of this king, with his ruthless egomaniac greed for gold, for power, for progeny, to this humble prayer, our judgment of him is tempered by knowing what he, in his best moments, longed for.

O Merciful Lord God, heavenly Father, I render most high laud, praise, and thanks unto Thee, that Thou hast preserved me both this night, and all the times and days of my life hitherto, under Thy protection; and hast suffered me to live until this present hour. And I beseech Thee heartily that Thou wilt vouchsafe to receive me this day, and the residue of my whole life, from henceforth into Thy good keeping; ruling and governing me with Thy Holy Spirit, that all manner of darkness and evil may be utterly chased and driven out of my heart, and that I may walk in the light of Thy truth, to Thy glory and praise, and to the help and furtherance of my neighbor, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Henry VIII, 1491-1547

Grant, O God, that we may not cancel out, with our living, what we pray for. If our lives cannot all be sermons in deeds, let us at least try to make them prayers fulfilled. In his name, Amen.

Cliches are only truths that have been overstated till they become a jargon like a tape-recorded message. Help us as we read these so-familiar words, to think and pray each phrase, and find its noble pristine glory.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the prayers of Thy people who call upon Thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, the Brightness of faithful souls, fill the world with Thy glory, we pray Thee, and show Thyself, by the radiance of Thy light, to all the nations of the world, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Gregorian Sacramentary, 600

The century spanned by the life of Dunstan, who rose from monk to primate of all England, was a troubled one, with paganism still rampant, and Scandinavian raids still harassing the coasts. Learned and devout, he was also fearless and outspoken against evil, and was banished by two kings, and accused by his enemies of practicing the black arts. His prayer has the bardic ring of simple genuine faith.

O Lord, O King, resplendent in the citadel of heaven, all hail continually; and of your clemency for your people still do have mercy.

O Christ, enthroned as King above, whom the nine orders of angels in their beauty praise without ceasing, deign ever to have mercy upon us, your servants.

O Christ, whom your one only Church throughout the world doth hymn, O you to whom the sun, the moon, and stars, the land and sea, do service ever, do have mercy.

O Lord, O gentle Son of Mary free, O King of kings, blessed Redeemer, upon

those who have been ransomed from the power of death by your own blood, ever have mercy.

O Sun of Righteousness, in all unclouded glory, supreme dispenser of justice, in that great day when you shall strictly judge all nations, we earnestly beseech you, upon this your people, who here stand before your presence, in your pity, Lord, then have mercy upon us. Amen.

Dunstan of Canterbury, 909-988

Lancelot Andrewes was a popular preacher, a busy Bishop, one of the editors of the King James Bible. Yet he found a need and a time for private devotions, and wrote his own in Greek. Though our times and activities differ widely, yet our personal needs are the same, and praying his prayers after him can give us the confidence for our day.

O Lord my God, for life and reason, nurture, preservation, guidance, education; for thy gifts of grace and nature, for thy calling, recalling, manifold recalling me again and again; for thy forbearance, long-suffering, toward me, even until now; for all from whom I have received any good or help; for the use of thy present good things; for thy promise, and my hope, of good things to come.

For all these things, and for all other, which I know, which I know not, manifest or secret, remembered or forgotten by me, I praise thee, I bless thee, I give thee thanks; and I will praise, and bless, and give thee thanks, all the days of my life.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me? Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. Amen.

Lancelot Andrewes, 1555-1626

You, most merciful God, do I now invoke to descend into my soul, which you have prepared for your reception by the desire which you have breathed into it. Ere ever I cried to you, you most merciful, had called and sought me, that I might find you, and finding love you. Even so I sought and found you, Lord, and desired to love you. Increase my desire, and grant me what I ask. See, I love you, but too little; strengthen my love. When my spirit aspires to you and meditates on your unspeakable goodness, the burden of the flesh becomes less heavy, the tumult of thought is stilled, the weight of mortality is less oppressive. Then fain would my soul fly even upward to your glorious throne, and there be filled with the refreshing solace that belongs to the citizens of heaven. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

We have senior citizens, God, and militant and liberated youth (who will one day be seniors); but citizens of heaven, we don't know much about. Let us think on this post-graduate level–about the glorious things awaiting us when we pass on from being merely senior citizens of earth to eternal residents of your Shangri-la and help us do our home-work to be ready. Amen.

Victim of the Puritan purge in England, this outspoken defender of the established church expresses in his prayers the kind of responsible, concerned, fatherly care both for the church as a body, and for the individual believer that St. Paul commends in a Bishop. May we pray it with him, for ourselves and for our community and national churches, that they may rise above narrow-minded bigotry, rivalry and mutual distrust, and unite to tackle the monumental task of world redemption.

Gracious Father, we humbly beseech Thee for Thy Universal Church. Fill it with all truth, with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; and where it is in error, direct it; where it is superstitious, rectify it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it; where it is divided and rent asunder, make up the breaches thereof, O Thou holy One of Israel; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1573-1645

"For the beauty of the earth" we sing our thanks, and then destroy it with our wanton corruption of air, water, and land. Modern ecologists should take as their patron saint, Francis of Assisi. Our times are not so very different, with their national rivalry, their racial hatreds, their brutality and violence, calculated or merely uncontrolled, with their indifference to mass murder in war, and their maudlin grief over individual death. We need urgently to learn St. Francis' humanity and humility, his devotion to God, and his affinity with all created things.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble and precious and clean. Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom you give us light in the darkness; and he is bright and pleasant and very mighty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, which sustains us and keeps us, and brings forth divers fruits and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for our sister the death of the body from whom no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin. Blessed are they who are found walking by your most holy will.

St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

Lord, grant me the sorrow of the humble; a mind escaped from mortal body, to love, to laud, and to behold thee and cherish every act and thought that is toward thee. Grant me a clear and sober and genuinely prayerful mind with real intuition of thy will, together with the love and joy which make it easy to perform. Lord, vouchsafe me always modest progress toward better things, and never to backslide.

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1327

Whether preaching to crowds in his German forest home, or teaching students in Paris, the "Master" called them all to deep personal union with you in spirit. Not everybody can come to you in this mystic communion. Martha was too busy, and Jesus scolded her, saying that Mary had chosen the better way. Help us, too, O God, to forget for awhile, the practical affairs of life, and escape, like a bird, freed from its cage, to sit at your feet, like Mary, and learn love and joy. Amen.

Prayer was to Martin Luther a personal communion of man with his Maker, and so basic that it became one of the tenets of the church he founded. Though the Lutheran Liturgy is, in many ways, but a translation from Latin into an understood vernacular so that the congregation might truly pray with the Saints, Luther also encouraged private devotions and the spontaneous prayer of the spirit.

We thank you, O God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have revealed your Son to us, on whom we have believed, whom we have loved, and whom we worship. O Lord Jesus Christ, we commend our souls to you. O heavenly Father, we know that although we shall in your own good time be taken away from this life, we shall live forever with you. "God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but have eternal life." Father, into your hands we commend our spirits; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Martin Luther, 1483-1546

O Lord our God, under the shadow of Thy wings let us hope. Thou wilt support us both when little, and even to gray hairs. When our strength is of Thee, it is strength indeed; but, when our own, it is feebleness. We return unto Thee, leaning on the things which Thou hast created, and passing on to Thyself, who hast wonderfully made them; for with Thee is refreshment and true strength. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

We don't all raise chickens, God, and some have never seen a hen with her wings spread out like awnings or arms to fiercely protect the tiny frail chicks. But wings we know, from soaring birds and airplanes; and they not only cast a cooling welcome shadow on a hot airport; they can also bear us up to places we could never reach without them. An airplane is wonderfully made to carry us, like babes in a womb; but you made the men and the minds who made them, and those who guide them. Lift us up to cool refreshing planes of living, and infuse us with the strength that comes only from faith in you. Amen.

This "Hymn of the Hungarian Galley Slaves" was written by one of 40 Reformed Pastors condemned to the galleys in the persecution in Hungary. When news of this infamy reached Protestant Europe, a great protest arose, which led to their release. When the pastors climbed out into the light, thin and scarred but unbroken in spirit, they were singing this hymn, which has been called the National Anthem of the Hungarian church. Like the captive Israelites in Babylon, they kept their faith alive with song.

Lift your head, O Zion, weeping, Still the Lord your Father is;
You are daily in his keeping, And your every care is his.
Rise and be of gladsome heart, And with courage play your part;
Soon again his arms will fold you to his loving heart and hold you.

Though in chains you now are grieving, Though a tortured slave you die,
Zion, if you die believing, Heaven's path shall open lie.
Upward gaze and happy be, God has not forsaken thee;
You his people are, and surely he will fold his own securely. Amen.

Karoly Jeszensky, c. 1674

Born in Antioch, where Christians first bore that name, John Chrysostum rose to a position of great influence in the Eastern Church, and was made Bishop of Constantinople. Like his contemporary, Ambrose of Milan, he encouraged singing and a godly life, holding that "there would be no more heathen, if we would be true Christians."

Remember, O Lord, this city wherein we dwell and every other city and country, and all the faithful who dwell in them. Remember, O Lord, all who travel by land or water, all that labor under sickness or slavery; remember them for health and safety. Remember, O Lord, those in your Holy Church who bring forth good fruit, are rich in good works, and forget not the poor. Grant unto us all your mercy and loving-kindness, and grant that we may with one mouth and one heart praise and glorify your great and glorious name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now, henceforth, and forever. Amen.

Lord God, of might inconceivable, of glory incomprehensible, of mercy immeasurable, of benignity ineffable; do you, O Master, look down upon us in your tender love, and show forth, toward us and those who pray with us, your rich mercy and compassion. Amen.

John Chrysostum, 345-407

Almighty and everlasting God, the Brightness of faithful souls, fill the world with Thy glory, we pray Thee, and show Thyself, by the radiance of Thy light, to all the nations of the world, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Gregorian Sacramentary, 590

Fountain of everlasting Light, pour upon us the glory of Thy brightness, and let our hearts be graciously enlightened by Thy holy radiance, that we may serve Thee in righteousness all our days; that so we may escape the darkness of this world, and by Thy guidance, attain the land of eternal brightness.

Sarum Breviary, 1085

When we grope about for candles in a black-out, we understand why ancient pagans worshipped the sun, and early Christians, whether in Rome, or Salisbury, England, took Light as Your symbol. We use our brightest lights to flood-light beautiful cathedrals and parks and fountains. What if they were turned on our slums and our gutters and our back alleys? Flood our hearts with your search-light, O God, that we may clean up our secret haunts of vice, and make them like parks and cathedrals for Your presence. Amen.

Christians in Spain under the Moors saw their churches closed and lamps extinguished, just as Christians today have in some countries in the world. To them light meant hope and abiding faith, in the midst of persecution and rejection and unbelief.

Hear us, O never-failing Light, Lord our God, the Fountain of light, the Light of Thine Angels, Principalities, Powers, and of all intelligent beings; Who hast created the light of Thy Saints. May our souls be lamps of Thine, kindle and illuminated by Thee. May they shine and burn with the truth, and never go out in darkness and ashes. May the gloom of sins be cleared away, and the light of perpetual faith abide with us. Amen.

Mozarabic, before 700

Help us, O God, to remember that our faith, like the lamps of the virgins waiting for the bridegroom, need to be kept cleaned and trimmed and filled with oil, ready for your coming. Come upon us, like the presence of the Prince of glory, that we may go about with a radiance that comes only from being with you. In his name, Amen.

So revered were the writings of this early English monk that he was called "The Venerable Bede." He spent his quiet life at Jarrow, then a newly founded monastery, now one of the most famous private schools in England (Harrow); but though he never travelled, there are now schools around the world bearing his name (San Beda). "Singing the daily services in church, study, teaching and writing have always been my delight." It is to him we owe the record of the legends of Camelot and King Arthur.

And now we beseech Thee, Lord Jesus, that to whom Thou dost vouchsafe sweet draughts of the words of Thy knowledge, Thou wilt also, of Thy Goodness, grant that we may, in due time, come to Thee, the fountain of all wisdom, and ever stand before Thy face.

The Venerable Bede, 673-735

Grant, dear Master and Teacher, that we and our children, and all teachers and students, may ever look on study as the pouring and drinking of a cooling drink, and may continue, all our lives, to be scholars, eagerly seeking for new truths, and for a truer understanding of the one who said, "I am the Truth." In His Name, Amen.

Called from Italy by a King of England to be Bishop of Canterbury, Anselm anticipated Thomas a' Becket in his opposing of church to state. Though not martyred as was Thomas, Anselm was frequently banished; and it was during these periods that he wrote his many scholarly works and his moving prayers.

merciful God, fill our hearts, we pray Thee, with the graces of Thy Holy Spirit, with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Teach us to love those who hate us, to pray for those who despitefully use us, that we may be the children of Thee our Father, who makest Thy sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendest rain on the just and on the unjust. In adversity grant us grace to be patient; in prosperity keep us humble; may we guard the door of our lips; may we lightly esteem the pleasures of this world, and thirst after heavenly things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Anselm, 1033-1106

That the evils in the world today stem from a lack of love, most of us will agree; absence of love in the family, lack of concern for the needy, neglect of the aged, rivalry instead of love between races and nations. But few of us have yearned for it as deeply as Thomas a' Kempis, and few have seen as clearly that it can only spring from a profound love for God–few since St. John, and Jesus Christ.

Ah, Lord God, Thou holy Lover of my soul, when Thou comest into my soul, all that is within me shall rejoice. Thou art my Hope and Refuge in the day of my trouble. Set me free from all evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections that, being inwardly cured and thoroughly cleansed, I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth; because Love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. Let me love Thee more than myself, nor love myself but for Thee; and in Thee all that truly love Thee, as the law of love commandeth, shining out from Thyself. Amen.

Thomas a' Kempis, 1379-1471

Called the "mellifluous doctor," this dominant figure in a turbulent age was, in spite of his bitter condemnation of Abelard and his championing of a disastrous Crusade, a devout man. Perhaps his public mistakes made more profound and sincere his private prayers, and his book, *Steps to Humility*.

O God, my heart is a vain heart, a vagabond and unstable heart; while it is led by its own judgment, and wanting divine counsel, it cannot subsist in itself; and while it divers ways seekest out, findeth none, but remaineth miserable through labor, and void of peace: it agreeth not with itself, it dissenteth from itself, it altereth resolutions, changeth the judgment, frameth new thoughts, pulleth down the old, and buildeth them up again: it willeth and willeth not; and never remaineth in the same state.

Come, Holy Spirit, and bring from heaven a ray of Thy light! O cleanse that which is sordid; bedew that which is dried up; heal that which is wounded; bend that which is stubborn, cherish in Thy bosom that which is cold; guide that which is wandering; and grant unto Thy servants, putting their trust in Thee, the merit of Thy righteousness.

Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090-1153

My God, let me be thankful as I remember and acknowledge all your mercies. Let my whole self be steeped in love of you and all my being cry Lord, there is none like you! You have broken the chains that bound me; I will sacrifice in your honour. I shall tell how it was that you broke them and, when they hear what I have to tell, all who adore you will exclaim, "Blessed be the Lord in heaven and on earth. Great and wonderful is his name."

The words of your Scriptures were planted firmly in my heart and on all sides you were there like a rampart to defend me. Of your eternal life I was certain, although I had only seen it like a confused reflection in a mirror. I did not ask for more certain proof of you, but only to be made more steadfast in you. But in my wordly life all was confusion. My heart had still to be rid of the leaven which remained. I should have been glad to follow the right road, to follow our Saviour himself, but still I could not make up my mind to venture along the narrow path.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Give us, O Father, the yearning of this saint to put our lives in order, to be rid of confusion, and be firmly, joyfully, fixed in our faith in you. Amen.

Religion is the fear of God, and its demonstration is good works; and faith is the root of both: For without faith we cannot please God, nor can we fear what we do not believe.

He was holy, humble, harmless, meek, merciful, when among us, and yet he is among us still, and in us too, a living and perpetual Preacher of the same Grace, by his Spirit in our consciences.

To be like Christ, then, is to be a Christian. And regneration is the only way to the Kingdom of God, which we pray for.

William Penn, 1644-1718

The Friends believe that the Holy Spirit is our Inner Light. If we could keep it burning in us like the perpetual light of synagogues, Catholic churches, and mosques, we could shine like Moses coming down from Sinai, or the disciples, after Pentecost. By that light we could see the answer to hard questions, we could see the needs of others and how to help them. Give us the faith, O God, to accept and keep your Spirit shining in us. Amen.

The problem of how a just and loving God could create a world that contains suffering and pain was confronted fifteen hundred years ago, as it still is daily. Here is Augustine's answer.

It is always the case that the greater the joy, the greater is the pain which precedes it. Why should this be, O Lord my God, when you are your own eternal joy, you are Joy itself and you are always surrounded by creatures which rejoice in you? Why is it that in this part of your creation which we know there is this ebb and flow of progress and retreat, of hurt and reconciliation? Is this the rhythm of our world? Is this what you prescribed when from the heights of heaven to the depths of the earth, from the first beginnings to the end of time, from the angel to the worm, from the first movement to the last, you allotted a proper place and a proper time to good things of every kind and to all your just world? How can I hope to understand the height and the depth of you, from the greatest to the most lowly of your works? You never depart from me, yet it is hard for us to return to you.

Come, O Lord, and stir our hearts. Call us back to yourself. Kindle your fire in us and carry us away. Let us love and hasten to your side. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

This son of a pagan family in Roman Gaul became, after his conversion, such an outstanding spokesman for Christianity that he was appointed Bishop. His attacks on the Arian heresy (denying the divinity of Christ) led to a temporary banishment. On his return, he devoted himself to his congregation, writing for them, like his contemporary, Bishop Ambrose of Milan, hymns and codes of Christian living.

He who said, "Ask, and the gift will come; seek, and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you," is not untrue to his word. I then, needy in all conscience, will pray for what I need, and I will apply myself unremittingly to the study of your prophets and apostles, knocking at every door that is locked against my understanding; but it is for you to give me what I pray for, and to see that what I am looking for is there, and that the door opens when I knock. We are heavy with the lazy stupor that is ours by nature, and when we try to understand your nature or your attributes the weakness of our minds keeps us within the limits of natural ignorance; but the study of your teaching provides us with the elements of a real knowledge of you, and the obedience involved in faith carries us beyond natural opinion.

Hilary of Poitiers, 300-367

Since this prayer entered the liturgy of the Eastern church the centuries that have passed have made us cynical and skeptical, with their calamities and terrors, their probings of the evils of the sub-conscious mind. Yet the sunlight and the starlight still have power to amaze us. We need to pray again in naive faith that God's Truth will still avail to arm us for each day's battle with a godless world, to forgive our failures, lend us insight and vision, and comfort us in trial.

Praised be Thou, O God, Almighty Ruler, Who dost make the day bright with Thy sunshine, and the night with the beams of heavenly fires! Listen now to our prayers, and forgive us both our conscious and our unconscious transgressions. Clothe us with the armour of righteousness; shield us with Thy truth; watch over us with Thy power; save us from all calamity; and give us grace to pass all the days of our life, blameless, holy, peaceful, free from sin, terror, and offence. For with Thee is mercy and plenteous redemption, our Lord and God, and to Thee we bring our thanks and praise. Amen.

Greek Church

This outstanding English divine was of French Huguenot ancestry, one of many leaders who sprang from this refugee church. A man of noble and independent character, he became prominent in the non-conformist Unitarian movement that sought to purify the English church. This much-maligned faith, which attracted many from the Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational churches, actually taught what many of us believe today: that Jesus was both human and divine, and showed in his life, teachings, and death, the magnitude of divine love. A powerful preacher and influential teacher, Martineau was also a prolific writer, and left behind many theological and devotional works.

O Thou Who art Love and dwellest in love! Teach us herein to be followers of Thee, as dear children. Never may we shut our hearts against the sorrows of even the unthankful and the evil. Make us organs of Thy tender mercy, to soothe the wretched, to lift the penitent, to seek and to save the lost; till all shall at length know themselves Thy children, and be one with each other and with Thee. Amen.

James Martineau, 1805-1900

We found that some men prayed to you, Lord, and we learned from them to do the same, thinking of you in the only way that we could understand, as some great person who could listen to us and help us, even though we could not see you or hear you or touch you. I was still a boy when I first began to pray to you, my Help and Refuge. I used to prattle away to you, and though I was small, my devotion was great when I begged you not to let me be beaten at school. Sometimes, for my own good, you did not grant my prayer, and then my elders and even my parents, who certainly wished me no harm, would laugh at the beating I got. No one pitied either the boys or the men, though surely we deserved pity. Was the master who beat me himself very different from me? If he were worsted by a colleague in some petty argument, he would be convulsed with anger and envy, much more so than I was when a playmate beat me at a game of ball. Look on these things with pity, O Lord, and free us who now call upon you from such delusions. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Give us, O God, the simple trusting faith of a child, that we may truly enter the heaven of your presence. Amen.

Basil, known as the Great, was a learned doctor and beloved Bishop of Caesarea. Son of a Christian family dating back to the church founded by Paul, he was firm in dealing with imperial authority, but gentle and humanitarian toward his people, for whom he provided schools, hospitals, and rest houses. One of the oldest liturgies, still used in the Coptic churches of Egypt and Ethiopia today, includes many of his prayers.

Great and eternal, Lord our God, wonderful in glory, who keepest covenant and promise for those that love Thee with their whole heart, who art the life of all, the help of those that flee unto Thee, the hope of those who cry unto Thee, cleanse our souls and bodies, our hearts and consciences, that with a pure heart and a clear mind, with perfect love and calm hope, we may venture confidently and fearlessly to pray unto Thee.

We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, to ask for thy blessings. Steer Thou the vessel of our life towards Thyself, Thou tranquil Haven of all storm-tossed souls. Show us the course wherein we should go; guide and enable us unto that Which is our true good. Amen.

Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil, 330-376

Give me, O Lord, purity of lips, a clean and innocent heart, humility, fortitude, patience. Give me the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness, and of Thy fear. Make me ever to seek Thy face with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind; grant me to have a contrite and humble heart in Thy presence. Most high, eternal, and ineffable Wisdom, drive away from me the darkness of blindness and ignorance; most high and eternal strength, deliver me; most high and eternal Light, illuminate me; most high and infinite Mercy, have mercy on me. Amen.

Gallican Sacramentary, 800

When Pope Gregory sent out missionaries to Gaul, Germany and England, they wrote back in alarm, that the churches already established had departed from the true order, but Gregory wrote to them to use whatever was good, wherever they found it, in the worship of God. Some are bothered today when we bring guitars and bongos into the chancel and swing the hymns, and use the language and dialect of daily life. Help us to believe, with Peter and Gregory, that nothing is unclean that is offered in purity of spirit, and bring you the best that we can offer, in your praise. In his name, Amen.

Both trouble and prosperity were familiar to this English scholar who served two kings, and was imprisoned and executed by another monarch. Raised to the post of Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry VIII, whom he supported in his successive marital ventures, advisor to young Edward VI, Cranmer was tried and burned at the stake by Queen Mary, whose mother was Henry's first victim. He enriched the English church with his translation of the Book of Common Prayer, from Latin into English.

O Lord our God, without Whose will and pleasure not a sparrow can fall to the ground, grant to us in times of trouble to be patient without murmuring or despair, and in prosperity to acknowledge Thy gifts, and to confess that all our endowments come from Thee, O Father of lights, Who givest liberally and upbraidest not. Give us, by Thy Holy Spirit, a willing heart and a ready hand to use all Thy gifts to Thy praise and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Archbishop Cranmer, 1489-1556

That power corrupts is evident from the history of Spain, which, under the Catholic monarchs became a bastion of orthodoxy, ruthlessly suppressing "heresy." But back in the centuries when the Moslems ruled, and Christians were a minority group fighting for their life, its adherents were a peace-loving people. All who thirst for guidance and truth in the confusion of our world today, and all who long for peace in its senseless slaughter and strife, can still pray these early prayers; and those for whom we pray may well include the land where the prayers were first raised.

Guide us in Thy way, O Lord, and mercifully show the fountain of wisdom to our thirsting minds; that we may be free from sorrowful heaviness, and may drink in the sweetness of life eternal. Amen.

O God, Who art Peace everlasting, Whose chosen reward is the gift of peace, and Who hast taught us that the peace-makers are Thy children, pour Thy peace into our souls, that everything discordant may utterly vanish, and all that makes for peace be sweet to us forever. Amen.

Mozarabic, before 700

In his desire to reach people's hearts, this saint wrote hymns using Biblical imagery: Jesus as our joy, our food and drink, our truth and light.

Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts!
Thou fount of life! Thou light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on Thee call;
To them that seek Thee, Thou art good,
To them that find Thee–All in all!

We taste Thee, O Thou living bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the fountain head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay!
Make all our moments calm and bright;
Chase the dark night of sin away–
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light!
Amen.

Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090-1153

We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women subsisting under the covert of Thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer–with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil, help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts–eager to labour–eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion–and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it. Amen.

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850-94

The author of those delights of our childhood, *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped,* fled from a severe Scottish climate and a stern father to the South Seas. Though he did not find health in Samoa and died of TB at 44, he found a warm welcome. Each day he gathered his neighbors and native household for prayer. Bless, O God, our neighbors and friends who are in need, and show us how to share You, and the strength You give, with them. Amen.

O God, who didst wonderfully create and more wonderfully redeem mankind, grant us with steadfast mind to resist the allurements of sin that we may attain to the joys of everlasting life. Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gregorian Sacramentary, 600

Sin and sickness are just as common evils of the spirit and body today as they were then, O God, though most of us would not pray for resistance, in order to enjoy immortality, nor agree that we have no power to help ourselves. Yet when we have done all that man's researches can do to stop these twin evils, how they loom up yet and threaten our lives and our peace! Give us, again, O Holy One, that steadfast mind of faith in your surpassing Power, to save us from ourselves; and a true and deep desire to know and be with you in a better world beyond. Amen.

Counsellor to three English monarchs during the troubled times that established the Anglican church, then saw it briefly overthrown and a king who defended it beheaded, Andrewes drew his daily strength from devotions, which he wrote down in a diary. This framework of prayer can contain, like an incense-bowl, our own petitions.

And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly, my hope is even in Thee. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I will fear no evil. Lord, Thou knowest whereof we be made; Thou remeberest that we are but dust. I am Thine. Oh, save me! Behold, O Lord, how that I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine hand-maid. Thine unprofitable servant, yet Thy servant. Thy lost prodigal child, yet Thy child. Into Thy hands I commend myself as unto a faithful Creator. Lord, I am created in Thine own image. Suffer not Thine own image to be utterly defaced, but renew it again in righteousness and true holiness. Into Thine hands I commend myself, for Thou hast redeemed me, Thou God of Truth. Amen.

Lancelot Andrewes, 1555-1626

While Charlemagne was bringing Christianity to France, Alfred the Great was trying to unite the many disparate peoples of the English isles, and make them a Christian nation.

O you who are the Father of that Son which has awakened us, and still urges us out of the sleep of our sins, and exhorts us that we become yours, to you, Lord, we pray, who are the supreme Truth. We implore you, O Lord, who are the highest Wisdom; through you are wise all those that are so. You are the intellectual Light, and from you man derives his understanding. To you, O God, we call and speak. Hear us, O Lord, for you are our God and our Lord, our Father and our Creator, our Ruler and our Hope, our Wealth and our Honour, our Home, our Country, our Salvation, and our Life. Few of your servants comprehend you, but at least we love you– yea, love you above all other things. We seek you, we follow you, we are ready to serve you; under your power we desire to live, for you are the Sovereign of all. We pray you to command us as you will; through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

King Alfred, 849-899

Our English-Huguenot-Unitarian again puts his finger on our weaknesses, and voices our yearnings in eloquent phrases. May we say and mean them from the depth of our hearts.

O Searcher of hearts, Thou knowest us better than we know ourselves, and seest the sins which our sinfulness hides from us. Yet even our own conscience beareth witness against us, that we often slumber on our appointed watch; that we walk not always lovingly with each other, and humbly with Thee; and we withold that entire sacrifice of ourselves to Thy perfect will, without which we are not crucified with Christ, or sharers in His redemption. Oh look upon our contrition, and lift up our weakness, and let the dayspring yet arise within our hearts, and bring us healing, strength, and joy. Day by day may we grow in faith, in self-denial, in charity, in heavenly mindedness. And then, mingle us at last with the mighty host of Thy redeemed for evermore. Amen.

James Martineau, 1805-1900

Sometimes we wish the saints had been more specific about their "mercies," their "temptations and adversities." But in the monastic life which many of them led, these would have been very different from our experience in the hurly-burly of modern life. So perhaps the generalities are better, allowing us to pray into them our specific thanks, our unique problems and cares. The source of help is, in both cases, the same unchangeable Presence.

Lord, what is my confidence which I have in this life? Is it not you, O Lord, my God, whose mercies are without number? Where has it ever been well with me without you, or where could it be ill with me, when you were present? I rather choose to be a pilgrim on earth, than without you to possess heaven. Where you are, there is heaven; and where you are not, there is death and hell. There is none that can help me in my necessities, but only you, my God; you are my Hope, you my Confidence. Although you expose me to divers temptations and adversities, yet you order all this to my advantage; in which trial of me you ought no less to be loved and praised, than if you filled me full of heavenly consolations. Amen.

Thomas a' Kempis, 1379-1471

The Lord commands every one of us, in all the actions of life, to regard his vocation. It will be no small alleviation of his cares, labors, troubles and other burdens, when a man knows that in all these things, he has God for his guide. The magistrate will execute his office with greater pleasure, the father of a family will confine himself to his duty with more satisfaction, and all in their respective spheres of life will bear and surmount the inconveniences, cares, disappointments and anxieties which befall them when they shall be persuaded that every individual has his burden laid upon him by God . . .

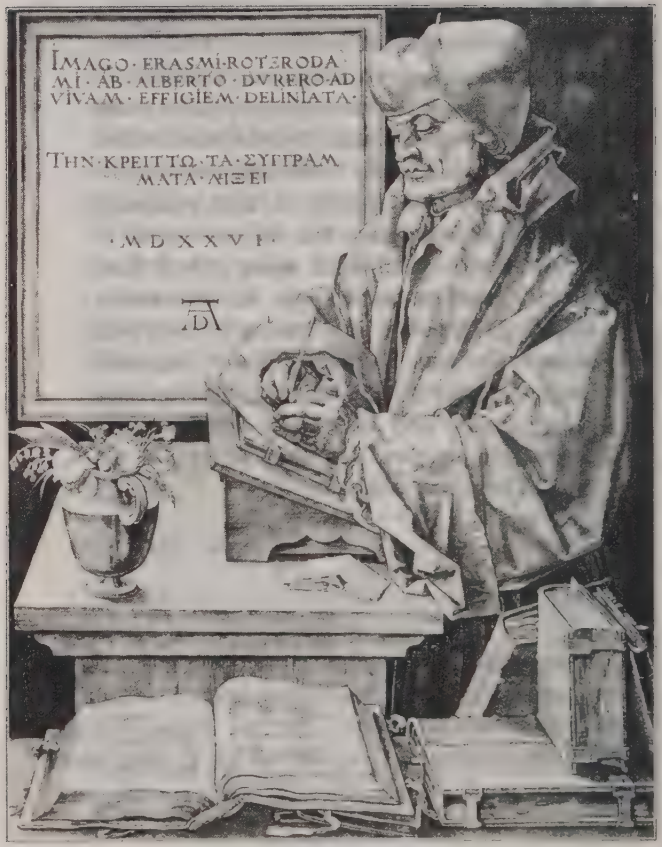
John Calvin, 1509-1664

Help us, O God, to stop peering across the fence for greener grass, and to learn that the place we have, the work we do, the people we help are the right ones, if you are Our Guide; and to be contented. Amen.

O God, the Light of every heart that sees you, the Life of every soul that loves you, the Strength of every mind that seeks you, grant me ever to continue steadfast in your holy love. Be the joy of my heart; take it all to yourself, and therein abide. The house of my soul is, I confess, too narrow for you; do you enlarge it, that you may enter in; it is ruinous, but do you repair it. It has that within which must offend your eyes; I confess and know it; but whose help shall I implore in cleansing it, but yours alone? To you, therefore, I cry urgently, begging that you will cleanse me from my secret faults, and keep your servant from presumptuous sins, that they never get dominion over me. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

So many things we need, O dear God, and you can give them all: light, strength, joy, a cleansing, indwelling Guardian Spirit. For all these, we too, urgently cry to you, O God. Be our all. In your name, Amen.



Erasmus von Rotterdam, 1526

Familiar to us through the painting by Holbein and the woodcut by Durer (see p. 72), Erasmus seldom left the study where he is shown surrounded by books, penning his own works on Christian living. He looked on the Christian life as warfare against ignorance and evil desires, waged, not between men, but within man himself. Erasmus would have agreed with the comic-strip philosopher, Pogo, that "we have met the enemy, and the enemy is US." He refused to be drawn into the Reformation by Luther, but left many noble prayers.

Lord Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life, suffer us not to stray from you who are the Way; not to distrust you, who are Truth; nor to rest in any other thing than you, who are Life. Let your Holy Spirit teach us what to believe, what to do and wherein to take our rest.

Light Eternal, Sun of righteousness, evermore rising and never setting, shining light, food, gladness to all, mercifully vouchsafe to shine upon us and cast your beams upon the dullness of our understanding, and lift the dark mists of our sins and errors. Grant also that we, remembering how you have mercifully pardoned our misdeeds, may frankly forgive all those who trespass against us and maintain constant peace and charity toward our fellowmen.

Desiderius Erasmus, 1466-1536

O Lord, renew our spirits and draw our hearts unto Thyself that our work may not be to us a burden, but a delight; and give us such a mighty love to Thee as may sweeten all our obedience. Oh, let us not serve Thee with the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in Thee and rejoicing in Thy work. Amen.

Benjamin Jenks, 1646-1724

This pastor was not praying for church workers, but for a congregation made up of laymen and women in many jobs, from businessmen to home-makers, like us, O God. Jesus told us that whatever we do can be holy, if we offer it to You. The jobs we do just for promotion and position and "a living" can be real slavery. But the ones we do for love of you and our neighbor, no matter how small, can bring us a gladness and joy that nothing else gives. Deepen our devotion to You, O God, and show us our neighbor's need. In your name, Amen.

You, O Lord, who commandest me to ask, grant that I may receive; you put me onto seeking, let me be happy in finding; you bid me knock, I pray you open unto me. Be graciously pleased to direct and govern all my thoughts and actions, that for the future, I may serve you, and entirely devote myself to obeying you. Accept me, I beseech you, and draw me to yourself, that I may henceforth be yours by obedience and love, who am already all your own, as your creature. Even you, O Lord, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Mind-blowing, we would call it nowadays, O God, the idea that an Almighty Power would first make a race of human beings, place them in an ideal setting and turn them loose to destroy each other--while he stood by, in the shadow, waiting to be called on for help. Help us, O God, before we foul your world till it is unfit to live in, and then blow it up, totally exterminating all life. Give us the discipline, the foresight, the concern and love that can come only from you within us, and can make a happy family of your children. In your name. Amen.

We bless and praise and magnify Thee, O God of our Fathers, Who hast led us out of the shadows of night once more into the light of day. Unto Thy loving-kindness we make our entreaty; be merciful to our misdeeds; accept our prayers in the fullness of Thy compassion, for Thou art our refuge from one generation to another, O merciful and almighty God. Suffer the true Son of Thy righteousness to shine in our hearts, enlighten our reason, and purify our senses; that so we may walk honestly as in the day, in the way of Thy commandments, and reach at last the life eternal, where we shall rejoice in Thy inaccessible life. For Thou art the Fountain of Life, and in Thy light shall we see light. Amen.

Greek Church

Dear God, we are, in our day, sun-worshipers like the ancients. In old age, we move to Sun City to end our days in its warmth, and youth flock to the beaches or the roof-tops to soak up its rays. But you, who gave us our bodies to thrive and then wither and die and be buried in the dark, or destroyed in flames and heat, are also the maker of our minds and spirits. Shine on them, O lustrous One, and show us the Way, the Life and the Truth. In your name, Amen.

The patron saint of the Irish was a Romano-Briton who was taken captive in a pirate raid on England and sold into slavery. Having been reared in a Christian home, he turned to prayer, as he herded sheep on the green Irish hills. Escaping, he studied in Europe, and later returned as a missionary to Ireland, where his preaching and his miracles have become legendary. Like his contemporary, St. Augustine, he wrote an autobiographical book of *Confessions*.

May the strength of God pilot us. May the power of God preserve us. May the wisdom of God instruct us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us. May the shield of God defend us.

May the host of God guard us against the snares of the Evil One and the temptations of the world.

May Christ be with us. Christ before us. Christ in us. Christ over us. May Thy salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and for evermore. Amen.

St. Patrick, 389-461

Though seldom explicitly stated, a deep underlying faith sounds forth in the noble symphonic and choral music of this man who rose above the tragedy of silence and solitude to exalt us with his inner voices. It was a faith that God was constantly calling, and aiding us, and a conviction that we must respond with our best gifts for him and his children.

We must praise your goodness, that you have left nothing undone to draw us to yourself. But one thing we ask of you, our God, not to cease your work in our improvement. Let us tend toward you, no matter by what means, and be fruitful in good works, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ludwig von Beethoven, 1770-1827

This abbot of the Studite monastery in Constantinople was at the same time a strict disciplinarian, a vigorous agitator, and an artistic calligrapher and defendant of art in the controversy over icons. His prayers show the gentler side of his nature, and his deep concern for the church.

O Lord, who didst give to Thine Apostles peace, shed down upon us all Thy holy calm; gather together with Thy hand all those who are scattered, and bring them like sheep into the fold of Thy holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Strengthen and confirm me, O Lord, by Thy Cross, on the rock of faith, that my mind be not shaken by the attacks of the enemy. For Thou alone art holy.

Thou knowest, O Lord, how many and great are my sins, Thou knowest how often I sin, from day to day, from hour to hour, in the things I do and the things I leave undone. No more, O Lord, no more, O Lord my God, will I provoke Thee; no more shall I desire for anything but Thee, for Thou alone art truly lovable. And if again I offend in anything, I humbly beseech Thee of Thy mercy to grant me strength to find favour again in Thy sight and to live in a manner more pleasing to Thee. Amen.

Theodore Studita, 759-826

We bring before Thee, O Lord, the troubles and perils of people and nations, the sighing of prisoners and captives, the sorrows of the bereaved, the necessities of strangers, the helplessness of the weak, the despondency of the weary, the failing powers of the aged. O Lord, draw near to each; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Anselm, 1033-1106

Help us, dear God, like this early Bishop of the great see of Canterbury, who reluctantly devoted to administration a life he longed to spend in study, teaching and prayer, to broaden our concern and care beyond the petty shell of self and circle. Thus not only the wordless prayers that rise from us as we go about this day, but also our actions and reactions, our visits and advice, may bring your help to those in need. In your name, Amen.

This founder of the Scottish state Church, Presbyterian, was meek and gentle in bearing. When the Catholic Queen Mary came to the throne of Scotland, he fled to Switzerland. But in his writing he was bold and virulent, calling his attacks "Blasts" and "Trumpet Calls." He spent two years as a galley slave, but was revered and feared in Geneva, even by John Calvin; he later returned to lead the church of his rugged island home. His speech has much that is rugged, but in his prayers we hear the true voice of the gentle shepherd.

Honor and praise be unto Thee, O Lord our God, for all thy tender mercies again bestowed upon us throughout another week.

O God of all power, Who hast called from death the great Pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, comfort and defend the flock which He hath redeemed by the blood of the eternal testament; increase the number of true preachers; mitigate and lighten the hearts of the ignorant; relieve the pains of such as be afflicted, but especially of those that suffer for the testimony of the Truth, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

John Knox, 1505-1572

Come, O Lord, in much mercy down into my soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely mansion, I confess, for so glorious a Majesty, but such as you are fitting up for your reception, by holy and fervent desires of your own inspiring. Enter then, and adorn, and make it such as you can inhabit, since it is the work of your hands. Give me your own self, without which, though you should give me all that ever you have made, yet could not my desires be satisfied. Let my soul ever seek you, and let me persist in seeking, till I have done, and am in full possession of you. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Though Solomon, dedicating his splendid temple, said that God does not dwell in houses built by men's hands, people from St. Paul and Augustine on down have used the image of the body and the heart as a home for God. It is good because it calls us to a spiritual house-cleaning, to purge and purify, to sweep out the useless trash we allow to collect, to give up foolish expenditure and sneaky, unclean closet habits, to drop unsavory company, that our heart-room may be worthy of you. Come, do come, O Friend, and stay with me. In your name, Amen.

Grant unto us, Almighty God, of Thy good Spirit, that quiet heart, and that patient lowliness to which Thy comforting Spirit comes; that we, being humble toward Thee, and loving toward one another, may have our hearts prepared for that peace of Thine which passeth all understanding; which, if we have, the storms of life can hurt us but little, and the cares of life vex us not at all; in presence of which death shall lose its sting, and the grave its terror; and we, in calm joy, walk all the days of our appointed time, until our great change shall come. Amen.

George Dawson, 1821-76

We know, O God, that before your Spirit can enter us, we must learn to be humble, and patient, and willing to wait. But it's like the chicken and the egg—which came first? Unless you first show us our pride, we cannot be humble; unless you expose our futile busy-ness, we cannot learn repose. So, first, last, and always, walk with us each day. Amen.

The simplicity and intimacy of the *Little Prayers of Francis* make them endearing and enduring. It is hard to evoke the presence of this kindly, tender man, in the pretentious ugly churches (two of them adjoining) built in Assisi after his death by the Brothers whom he had called to give up all possessions, as Jesus Christ did, and live for service and devotion. But one can feel him there among the oleander and primroses on the grassy slope that rises beyond; and many of our youth, who spurn our greed for possessions, would have loved him.

O most high, Almighty, good Lord God: to you belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God, with all his creatures: and specially our brother the sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light: fair is he, and shining with a very great splendor: O Lord, to us he signifies you. Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, which He has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind: for the air and cloud, calms, and all weather, by which Thou upholdest in life all creatures.

Praise ye the Lord, and give thanks unto Him, and serve Him with great humility.

St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

Unlike later saints, Augustine did not withdraw from the world after his conversion, but continued an active life as a Bishop of his home territory in Northern Africa. His deep concern for all those in need comes through in this prayer, and we can pray it after him, thinking of those we know who need to be shielded from joy, soothed in suffering.

O Lord God, grant your peace to us, for you have supplied us with all things– the peace of rest, the peace of the Sabbath, which has no evening; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones. And all, for your Love's sake. Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

Every Christian that is in health is up early in the morning. We cannot think anything good of him who is such a slave to drowsiness as to neglect his business for it; how much more is he to be reproached that would rather be folded up in a bed than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration!

Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of Him that we are capable of in this life. When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in the highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness.

William Law, 1686-1761

Children often bounce out of bed at what we call an ungodly hour, full of energy and eagerness to be at their important business of playing; but it's not so easy, when its praying, and when we're older. God, Sir. Can you help me do the hard thing, and wake at a godly hour and spend a few minutes with you, before the rat-race begins? I know in my heart that the strength and joy I get from it will go with me all through the day. Amen.

Brother Lawrence had found such an advantage in walking in the presence of God, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others; but his example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the beholders. And it was observed that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen, he still preserved his recollection and heavenly mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquility of spirit. "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

Brother Lawrence, 1605-1691

O God, our lives are as noisy and cluttered as Brother Lawrence's kitchen, and the decibels and the confusion seem to mount. Grant each of us to learn his precious secret, of "walking in the presence," that this tranquility may carry us through the most trying times, able by the calm faith reflected in our face and actions to aid others. In your name, Amen.

Few saints deserve to stand beside St. Francis for total renunciation of the world and utter devotion to God. Ignatius Loyola is one of them. A very different man, learned, a brilliant writer, a stern disciplinarian, a shrewd administrator, an empire builder, he was, like St. Francis, an humble, totally dedicated man. Generations of sons have become benefactors of mankind through his disciplines. Though we may lack most of his qualities, we may pray his prayers, and seek, simply and honestly, to live up to them.

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. All that I am, all that I have, Thou hast given me, and I will give it back again to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy good pleasure. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with Thee I am rich enough, nor do I ask for aught besides. Amen.

St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556

Great plains inspire men to worship, and the Sarum plain, near Salisbury, England, was where the ancient Druids raised the monumental Stonehenge, for the worship of light at sunrise and moonset. Here many ancient kings were believed to be buried; and here a beautiful Gothic cathedral now stands, one of the first Christian churches built in England. A liturgy of prayer and chant developed here, much of which was later incorporated into the Anglican service, and is still a part of worship today.

Day breaks. Bestow Thy light upon us, O Lord, so that, being rid of the darkness of our hearts, we may attain unto the true Light.

In this hour, fill us, O Lord, with Thy mercy that rejoicing throughout the whole day, we may take delight in Thy praise.

O God, who through the grace of Thy Holy Spirit dost pour the gift of love into the hearts of Thy faithful people, grant us health, both of mind and of body, that we may love Thee with our whole strength, and with entire satisfaction may perform those things which are pleasing unto Thee, through Christ.

Sarum Breviary, 1085

This Easter prayer from the *Private Devotions* of Queen Elizabeth I's counsellor, has a timelessness and universality that make it a meaningful expression of our needs today.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who on this day didst rise again, raise up our souls unto newness of life, granting us repentance from dead works, and planting us in the likeness of Thy resurrection. O Thou Who didst also on this day of the week send down on Thy Apostles Thy most Holy Spirit, take not the same Spirit away from us, but grant to all Thy servants who ask of Thee, that they may be daily renewed and more plentifully enriched in the same, for Thine own mercies' sake; Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

Let us pray for the Churches throughout the world, for their truth, unity, and stability; that in all, charity may flourish, and truth may live. For our own Church, that what is lacking in it may be supplied, and what is unsound corrected; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, 1555-1626

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